

The Waiting Years: Enchi Fumiko and the Subjugated Voice of the Mother

Enchi Fumiko (1905–1986) was one of post-war Japan's most prominent women novelists. Her novel entitled *The Waiting Years* (*Onnazaka*, 1949–1957; 1957; tr. 1971) is set in early modern Japan and spans the four or so decades leading up to the end of the First World War. It is a narrative of feminine constraint loosely based on the life of the author's maternal grandmother. The protagonist, Tomo, lives her life subject to the intransigence of the discursive construct of good wife and wise mother (*ryôsaikenbo*), the sole normative role permitted to women of the era. This role demanded silent acquiescence to a set of maternal and wifely duties designed specifically to promote the expansion of Japan's Imperial project, a project which largely negated the independent subjectivity of women. Thus when Tomo speaks in public she can only do so in a subjugated voice that confirms her ontological marginalisation. Even her private voice passes largely unheard except in brief solipsistic monologues she delivers at various points throughout the narrative.

In an investigation of philosophy and the maternal body, Michelle Boulous Walker examines strategies that permit the foregrounding of the mother's unheard voice.¹ Drawing on the work of Walker, this discussion examines the subjugated voice of Tomo, the protagonist, and of other significant women featured in Enchi's narrative. It might be noted that, almost without exception, all the adult women in *The Waiting Years* are mothers. The discussion will, therefore, pay particular attention to the articulation between the subjugated voices of these women and their 'motherhood.'

Since Walker's work draws on a strong Western theoretical tradition, the analysis given here might be considered vulnerable to the types of criticisms levelled against scholarship which examines non-Western material through an essentialising Western framework. In feminist scholarship, criticism of this nature has perhaps been most famously made by Chandra Talpade Mohanty in her groundbreaking analysis of the tendency of Western theorists to erase historical and geographic specificity by constructing essentialist terms such as 'third world women.' However, the invocation of Walker should not be interpreted as advocacy for a model in which Western thought is used to 'other' or essentialise the position of women in Japan. On the contrary, this discussion argues that by listening intently to the subjugated maternal voices resonating throughout Enchi's text, researchers from diverse backgrounds can establish collective alliances from which to develop understandings of the common lived experiences of women, particularly as these relate to mothers and maternity.

Enchi Fumiko² was one of post-war Japan's most prominent women novelists. Active as a playwright in her youth, Enchi made a conscious decision in the 1930s to switch to prose fiction in order to more fully probe the interiority of her protagonists.³ The vast majority of her narratives feature women who are either birth mothers or who have a mother type relationship with a young woman or man.⁴ While it would be misleading to claim that Enchi's material is autobiographical,⁵ the author herself, who gave birth to a daughter in 1932, has noted a dependency on her own life experiences as the primary source for many of her texts.⁶ In addition, a number of critics comment on the oblique articulation between the experiences of the women in Enchi's narratives and the experiences of the author and other women in her family.⁷ This discussion focuses on the subjugated maternal voice in one of Enchi's most well-known works, *The Waiting Years*. Originally an intermittently serialised novel, *The Waiting Years* drew widespread critical acclaim when published in book form in 1957.⁸ The work is loosely based on the life experiences of Enchi's maternal grandmother passed on to the author in conversation with her mother. In other words, it is a text in which Enchi speaks the body of her grandmother using material provided by the speaking subject of her mother.

The Waiting Years is set in the period of Japan's modernisation and emergence as a nation-state during the last two decades of the nineteenth century and the early decades of the twentieth. This was an era during which the new nation, Japan, victorious in conflicts against China and Russia, sought parity with the United States and Great Britain as a 'great power' of the world. In addition to seeking a highly visible international profile, there was considerable domestic activity to ensure that citizens on the home front contributed to the national effort. The sole normative role designated for women in Japan at this time was that of 'wise wife and good mother.'⁹ This was a discursive entity constructed by the authorities to ensure that all women bore sons for the nation and created a home sanctuary to which men could retreat to re-gather their energies in readiness for the next stage of national growth. As often noted,¹⁰ the 'wise mother' element became significant in Japan only with the introduction of Western thought in the early Meiji Period (1868-1912). Pre-modern Confucian-based texts used to educate girls were largely silent on the issue of maternal responsibility. Instead, these materials focussed on the production of women who would graciously submit themselves to the rule of their fathers, husbands, and fathers-in-law. However, the arrival in Japan of Western theories advocating 'mother-love' as an essential element in the child's attainment of its full potential,¹¹ saw the role of wise parent relinquished by Meiji Era lords and masters to their good wives. Although Enchi provides no specific dates,

peripheral clues in the text indicate that *The Waiting Years* commences around 1888 and closes in approximately 1918.¹² This was precisely the era during which the political notion of institutional motherhood was introduced and entrenched in the consciousness of the citizenry of the emerging nation-state. It is perhaps not surprising, then, that the mother has strong significance in the narrative. With the exception of the concubine, Suga, all the women featured are mothers and are identified by Enchi as such. Even the lascivious Miya, the daughter-in-law of the protagonist notable for engaging in a long-term sexual relationship with her father-in-law, Tomo's husband, is identified immediately upon her entry to the text as the mother she will soon become.¹³

The power of the good wife, wise mother discourse was such that it obliterated the right of generations of women in early modern Japan to voice their desires or to assert themselves as active speaking subjects. Instead, women were required to exhibit mythological maternal attributes such as an innate capacity to nurture, voluntary dependence on a male head of the household, a modestly asexual and demure demeanour, and affiliation with the home and the child. It should be noted that Koyama Shizuko stresses the fact that 'child' here inevitably meant 'son.'¹⁴ Wise mothers were required to produce the sons who would contribute to the 'national wealth and military might.'¹⁵ Daughters remained peripheral to the national narrative.

As the paragon of socialised femininity, the mother who was also a wife was required to follow the phallogentric script prepared for her by the national authorities. Accordingly, the only legitimate public speech in which she could engage was that which confirmed her position as ontologically marginalised. In seeking to theorise this subjugation of the maternal voice in Japan it is useful to turn the work of Michelle Boulous Walker. Drawing particularly on the work of Luce Irigaray and also Michèle Le Doeuff, Walker has theorised a notion of silence which foregrounds the absent or unheard voice. She accordingly rejects a speech/non-speech dichotomous model of silence in favour of one which allows for silence itself as having the potential for speech. She labels this model as 'readable absence.'¹⁶ Walker argues that silence of this nature 'entails a spoken yet unheard voice,' a voice that is structured by a 'logic of oppression' and closely tied to denial. Walker is interested in denial since:

It opens the whole question of silence out onto more complex terrain than the question of exclusion would allow. The process of denial enacts a silencing by attempting to cover over repressed or troubled voices.¹⁷

Tomo, the protagonist of *The Waiting Years*, is possessed by precisely the sort of repressed and troubled voice to which Walker

refers. The discourse of the 'good wife and wise mother' operates to stifle any inclination she may have to articulate desires which deviate from those prescribed by the authorities. Should she publicly attempt to engage in subversive speech the legitimacy of her voice would be denied by the paradigm which inscribes women with the mark of compliance and passivity. Such denial might range from mild chastigation in the case of submissive women to the violent censure of 'insanity' often made against assertive and determined women. Nevertheless, neither denial nor dismissal can stem the private voice which, forced into subterranean mode, continues to speak forth; particularly, as we shall see later in the discussion, in response to established catalysts. Regardless of the logic of oppression which structures Tomo's existence, she will speak. However, the muted nature of this voice can make interpretation difficult without the assistance of strategies such as those suggested by Walker.

The use of Western theoretical material to support the analysis of non-Western material in a manner that universalises the former and that can both particularise and essentialise the latter has rightly drawn extensive criticism from non-Western scholars. Such criticism has notably been levelled in the Japan context by the prominent poet and thinker, Yoshimoto Takaaki (b. 1924, also known as Yoshimoto Ryûmei), who accused his fellow intellectuals in post-war Japan of clouding their thought with a universalising Western filter which rendered them incapable of appreciating the local context.¹⁸ In the field of feminist scholarship, criticism of this nature has been famously made by Chandra Talpade Mohanty. Mohanty argues that, through their relative control of the 'production, publication, distribution, and consumption of information and ideas',¹⁹ Eurocentric feminists are liable to construct fictitious and monolithic models of women outside their own group, models which erase important differences between women. Thus, when drawing on Western theoretical material to support an analysis of material from non-Western sites, care is necessary to ensure that the discussion does not slide into the same sort of imperialist turn that afflicts, for instance, Julia Kristeva's account of the women of China. Kristeva's enterprise here has been justly dismissed by Gayatri Spivak as, among other things, 'macrological nostalgia for the pre-history of the East.'²⁰ In her examination of the situation of women in China, Kristeva purports to speak in their collective voice. However, since she is familiar with neither the experience nor the discourse of the women (or their men) who are the object of her writing, her words not only lack authenticity, but are patronising and offensive. Rather than offering emancipatory solutions, Kristeva in fact engages in a process labelled by Arjun Appadurai as 'metonymic freezing,'²¹ that

is, a process by which one part or aspect of a people's life is employed to represent the group as a whole.

Contrary to the exclusionist effect identified by Mohanty, Spivak and Appadurai, this discussion seeks to draw on Western theoretical support merely to assist in locating overlapping hybrid spaces which can yield insights useful to women from a range of backgrounds. Critical though she is of Kristeva, Spivak herself rejects the exclusivist position that 'only a native can know the scene.'²² Thus it transpires that Kristeva's failure is a result of her approach rather than her project. Edward Said, for example, has pointed out the impossibility and undesirability of confining any given theory to its point of origin, advocating the vigorous application of theory developed in one context to other realms and terrains.²³ With respect to the specific field of Japanese literary studies, and in an appeal not unrelated to Said's proposal, Edward Fowler has called for a 'new kind of literary configuration.' This configuration, Fowler argues, should be a synthesis of Western, Japanese, and other cultural theoretical assumptions amalgamated in a manner that ensures a legitimate balance in the interpretation of the texts of Japan.²⁴ Livia Monnet, in her discussion of Japanese women's self-writing which doubles as a counter attack against conservative scholars opposed to revisionist feminist readings of Japanese narrative, pursues the point raised by Fowler more concretely. Here, Monnet advocates the creation of a new critical language which would 'strive to remain undogmatic, permeable and open to criticism and influences from all quarters.' Monnet's championing of an 'ideal, self-confident critic' who would be 'unafraid of pillaging existing theory for insights that might clarify her vision,'²⁵ is highly relevant to this discussion. As Monnet points out, the 'pillaging' of theory is part of an interpretative strategy which seeks to 'allow the text speak for itself.' She eloquently argues for:

a non-belligerent, flexible feminist stance, which, far from making claims for universal validity, would have to be tested again and again against different texts, allowing them to interfere, expanding, retracting and transforming itself in a never-ending effort to make criticism 'somehow commensurate' with the life speaking out in any [text].²⁶

Notwithstanding the indisputable validity of notions of difference, the fact also remains that there are significant commonalities in the lived experiences of women across cultures. Thus, in addition to acknowledging difference, it is important to identify these commonalities and to recognise the value of engaging in joint enterprises in order to fully comprehend the manner in which such commonalities operate. Knowledge of the circumstances of women from a diverse range of backgrounds forces the researcher to concede that her experiences are merely one small part of a diverse genealogy

that she shares with all women, regardless of nation, race, or ethnicity. Affiliation with this genealogy is a critical factor in extinguishing pretensions to privilege that can motivate the assumption of exclusive leadership or a belief in the right to speak in place of some putatively incapable 'other.' In fact, such affiliation confirms an obligation to suspend any tendency to universalise, to listen intently to the diverse voices of woman and to establish collective alliances with these voices of diversity. It is through alliances of this nature that sites of commonality in the lived experience of all women can best be probed.

The commonalities experienced by women are nowhere more apparent than in the realm of maternity. Motherhood can result in the body of the woman being subject to similar physical and social contingencies across cultures. Thus, reading texts about mothers across cultural sites can assist scholars working on theories of maternity to understand the similarities in maternal discourses which impinge on women of all backgrounds. Although Walker's discussion above focuses on the mother in Western thought, the suppression of the mother is not unique to this domain.²⁷ It is also evident in Japanese social and cultural criticism. Both streams feature literary mothers who are spoken of or about, but whose own speech is silenced. Mary-Lu Hill, for example, in a manner reminiscent of Irigaray's claim that the entire system of Western thought is based on the murder of the mother,²⁸ has discussed how the mother in E.M. Forster's *Howard's End* is rendered silent, comatose even, by the social role imposed upon her.²⁹ Similar maternal effacement is also rife in texts produced in Japan. In his discussion, for instance, on *Kôfuku na Kazoku* (1940, *The Happy Family*) by iconic early twentieth century writer Mushanokôji Saneatsu (1882–1946), Okuda Kôji notes that at the time of serialisation the author declared his intention to write a novel about the mother in the family. 'If I could' said Mushanokôji, 'I wanted to write something which focused on the mother rather than the wife.'³⁰ However, as Okuda points out, while the author might be true to his words in that the narrative is constructed around the idea of the mother, particularly as expressed in her relationship with the son, she does not actually appear all that often in the text. And it is the father, not the mother, who is the spokesperson for the family, even though, according to Okuda's assessment, he is the most 'juvenile' of the family members for whom the mother is required to care.³¹

In *The Waiting Years*, however, there is no doubt that the mother occupies centre-stage. She is the unequivocal protagonist and it is only rarely that she is spoken for. It is not that she is without a voice. However, that voice remains troubled as it seeks to speak forth from the cultural repression in which it is encased. In fact, the entire text is

an attempt to provide a space for the protagonist mother, Tomo, to adopt a speaking position and to give voice to the private desires which contest the public desires inscribed on her by the discursive institutions of maternity and wifehood.

Tomo, the protagonist of *The Waiting Years*, is a woman whose life is spent enduring the in-house sexual infidelity of her middle ranking, but nonetheless powerful, public official husband, Yukitomo. The narrative commences with Tomo's arrival in Tokyo where she has been dispatched by Yukitomo in order to buy her husband a concubine suitable for installation in the family home. The couple has two children. The older is Michimasa, a sullen, ill-natured boy, despised by his mother. The younger is Etsuko, a daughter accompanying her mother on the journey to Tokyo. Yukitomo has entrusted his wife with the task of purchasing a young woman secure in the knowledge that Tomo can be relied upon to choose a girl who will not compromise the family honour. The young woman selected, Suga, Yukitomo's first concubine, is little more than a child. She is duly escorted back to the family home in the provinces and indoctrinated into the sexual mores of the household. Yukitomo's appetites lead to the acquisition of a second concubine, Yumi. The master of the house also enters into an enduring sexual liaison with his daughter-in-law, the flirtatious Miya.

Throughout the forty years of her marriage Tomo putatively endures. She is a woman whose actions consistently uphold the early modern Japanese family code, even following her realization that no personal advantage accrues from her adherence to this rigid and outdated social system. Tomo is not the only mother in the text. There are, in fact, a number of other mother-daughter dyads featured in addition to Tomo and Etsuko. Each of these mothers cares for her child as far as she is able within her means. Even Suga's mother, forced to sell her daughter into concubinage, continues to follow the fortunes of her absent daughter. Thus, there is none of the overt contestation of mothering seen, for instance, in Kôno Taeko's 'Toddler Hunting,' a work which features a young woman's sadistic fantasies of child mutilation.³² The reader unfamiliar with Enchi's powers of subversion might initially interpret the multiple presence of nurturing mothers in *The Waiting Years* as evidence of the author's adherence to the ideology of the good wife, wise mother. However, a close reading of the text soon reveals that the work is far from being an homily to any essentialist, mythological mother. Although the mothers featured generally care for and nurture their children in the manner prescribed, these women simultaneously contest the maternal script even as they perform their role. They may well acquiesce, and there is certainly evidence of the self-sacrifice required by the discourse, such as Tomo's decision to remain with her

husband for the sake of her child, Etsuko.³³ However, there is also widespread subversion as the women seek ways and means to make heard their subjugated maternal voices. And none is more subversive than Tomo herself, who, with her wilful and potentially brutal ego, privately voices thoughts that are anathema to the idealised qualities of the politically mythologised mother.³⁴

In addition to her willingness to perform a maternal role, Tomo's apparent affiliation with the role of good wife can initially make any suggestion that *The Waiting Years* provides a narrative space in which a woman's subjugated voice can be heard appear rather chimeric. Tomo is a woman of prodigious moral rectitude who supports her husband in spite of the indignities he visits upon her. Her appearance is always immaculate. Even a stray hair falling across the face from her chignon offends.³⁵ Her public speech is irreproachable and, with her constrained social persona, she appears to offer little opportunity for a discussion on women who transgress by voicing their subjugated desires against the demands of the social script. For Tomo has putatively committed this script unquestioningly to memory and appears to have few defensive strategies when first confronted with the sexual excesses of her husband.

Yukitomo's dissipation is legion and scholars often invoke *The Waiting Years* when discussing the lot of women of the era in Japan. However, while it may be based loosely on fact, Enchi goes to some lengths from the outset to emphasise that Yukitomo's demands far exceed what is permissible even in the phallogentric standards that operate at the time. Under-officials and stewards who answer to Yukitomo are, for instance, 'scandalised'³⁶ by the audacity of their superior's behaviour in despatching his wife to the capital to buy a concubine. However, Tomo was a child, perhaps only fourteen,³⁷ when she came as a bride to Yukitomo in far-flung Kyûshû and she thus has limited conceptual weaponry with which to resist her unreasonable spouse.³⁸ Without either schooling or the cosmopolitan experiences which could have provided her with some mechanism of contestation, Tomo remains, for almost the entire text, unable to publicly speak her pain at the brutal erasure of her desire. In fact, she actively seeks to facilitate Yukitomo's access to indiscriminate sexual pleasure by ensuring that quite rigid constraints operate on the young women brought to the house for that purpose. Suga, the unblemished child chosen by Tomo to service her husband's body is, in fact, more intimidated by the mistress's steely demeanour than that of her husband.³⁹

Strategic silence can be a powerful weapon of resistance and, to some extent, the silencing of Tomo's public voice is voluntary. Refusal to speak is her primary tactic in the monumental battle of wills in

which she engages with her husband over the four decades of her marriage. Enchi clearly depicts Tomo as a woman of limited flexibility for whom to speak would be to capitulate. There is even a muted suggestion that the latter's refusal to compromise early in the marriage has contributed to the chasm between herself and her husband. In spite of her superficial acquiescence with the good wife ideology, Tomo's indomitable spirit, expressed partially through her crushingly wilful silence, is determined to be ascendant over Yukitomo's in a manner that makes a mockery of her public acquiescence with the social script.

Tomo's public silence and her intractable silence before her husband does not extend to her private voice, which is repeatedly heard in the silent monologues she delivers, generally in response to some critical incident disrupting her routine. Two matters which activate her voice are contact with the written text and, not surprisingly, being confronted by the sexual dissipation of her husband. In the remainder of the discussion, both of these elements will be examined. Attention will also be given to the significance of the absence of maternity in the concubine, Suga. The discussion will conclude with a survey of the manner in which Enchi has foregrounded the mother-daughter relationship in the narrative.

One of the most powerful motifs provoking Tomo's voice is contact with the disruptive desire of the written text. The secondary text, a text within the text, is one of Enchi's favourite narrative strategies. In *The Waiting Years*, there are several significant secondary texts, each designed by the author to focus reader attention on the situation of the protagonist, particularly with respect to her role as a mother. The embedded texts to be discussed here are a letter of exhortation from Tomo's mother,⁴⁰ the *kabuki* theatre drama entitled *The Yotsuya Ghost Tale*,⁴¹ and the tragic Buddhist fable of Queen Vaidehi.⁴² This last is the fable that informs the Ajase complex of Japanese psychoanalysis, a set of symptoms that, according to Peter Dale, was devised specifically to contest the significance of Freud's Oedipal complex in the context of Japanese society.⁴³ Where the Oedipal complex focuses on the father-child relationship, the Ajase complex foregrounds the relationship between the mother and the child as the cause of psychological disorder. Both fictional secondary narratives are tragic works resulting in acute suffering or death. Both are also intimately concerned with the mother and, moreover, the mother who carries an expiatory burden for her husband's transgressions. The content of Tomo's mother's letter is more mundane. Nevertheless, its tactical association with the fictive texts heightens its impact and accentuates the harsh reality of the existence of both the writer and her daughter. Beginning with this letter, it will be

helpful to examine Tomo's response to the three secondary texts listed above and how these act as a catalyst for her voice.⁴⁴

Tomo and her mother are among a number of significant mother and daughter dyads featured in *The Waiting Years*. A devout woman from the Kyûshû provinces, Tomo's mother passes away soon after the beginning of the narrative, but not before hearing that Yukitomo has dispatched her daughter on the fateful journey to Tokyo. The older woman resides several day's travel from Tomo's home and the tyranny of distance lies between the pair, making contact between them limited. However, news that Tomo's place in her husband's bed is about to be usurped activates the barely literate, ailing mother to find a voice to speak to what she instinctively understands to be her daughter's distress. 'Anguished at the thought of how Tomo must feel in the same house with a young concubine,' Enchi tells the reader, 'her mother had laboriously spelled out the letter in her clumsy hand.'⁴⁵ This letter is one of a number of occasions when the author uses a discourse of calligraphy to direct reader attention towards important elements in the narrative, in this case the mother's rural background and lack of education. These are elements she shares with her daughter⁴⁶ and the inference is clear that these factors prevent both mother and daughter from developing effective strategies to contest the social demands placed upon them.

The letter is a largely unsuccessful attempt to assuage what the mother knows must be her daughter's fears. In fact, it is doubtful that the mother herself believes what she writes, suggesting an interesting variation on Derrida's notion of the letter.⁴⁷ The older woman tries to convince Tomo that the presence of a concubine in the household is a function to be expected of Yukitomo's elevated position. However, Tomo dismisses her mother's exhortations to patience as 'no more than the tattered remnants of an outdated code that [she] had already seen through and been forced to cast aside.'⁴⁸ This comment is the culminating point of a gnawing dissatisfaction expressed by Tomo prior to the receipt of the mother's message. Her contemptuous response to her mother's advice is a direct assault against the discourses both of the family and of feminine passivity to which she previously adhered.

As solace, the mother urges her child to follow the teachings of Lord Amida, the Buddha of Everlasting Light, a powerful suggestion in that it calls up childhood memories in Tomo, including the evocative image of her mother's lips repeating the incessant chant, '*Namu Amida Butsu*' — 'Lord Amida, grant me refuge.'⁴⁹ These teachings, too, Tomo dismisses as a 'pack of lies,' and is merely irritated by 'the injunction in her mother's letter to leave everything to the Buddha.'⁵⁰ However, Tomo has no lasting harsh judgement to bring down upon her maternal parent. On the contrary, she is instinctively aware that

the bond with her mother is the very thing which nourishes her and that the power of this bond is enhanced by physical proximity with the body that bore her. She therefore resolves that:

as soon as the opportunity arose she would at least arrange to go home as her mother wished. Whatever happened, she must hear directly from her mother those last wishes that could not be conveyed by letter alone.⁵¹

Hence the letter from her mother creates a narrative space in which Tomo speaks, albeit silently and in solipsistic monologue only, her cynicism towards the discursive practices which enmesh her as well as her understanding of the power of the mother-daughter bond. It is interesting that she does so in anticipation of her own mother's voice.

Repeatedly humiliated by Yukitomo in a manner which includes failure to acknowledge any right to her own subjective desires, Tomo is unable to devise strategies of direct intervention that might lessen the burden she bears. Nevertheless, through her encounters with the powerful desire inherent in the fictive text she is able to compare her experiences and, in some cases, create alliances with the women in those texts. The two fictive texts which play a major role in this respect are the *Yotsuya Ghost Tale*, from the *kabuki* theatre repertoire, and the Buddhist tale of Queen Vaidehi. Both narratives foreground the mother. The former is a metaphor for Tomo's blighted relationship with her husband, while the latter addresses the piteous lot of the mother unable to love a hateful son.

The famed summer *kabuki* ghost tale, *Yotsuya Ghost Tale*, concerns the treachery of male infidelity, the despair of the woman so betrayed and the concomitant feminine desire for revenge. Falling ill and losing her beauty following the birth of a child, the protagonist of the tale, Oiwa, is discarded by her husband, Tamiya Iemon.⁵² Filled with resentment, Oiwa becomes a monstrous vengeful spirit who extracts a gruesome revenge on Iemon. Watching the drama unfold before her at a *kabuki* performance, Tomo is struck by the similarity between the tragedy of Oiwa and her own plight. However, unlike Oiwa, she does not abandon her children, ultimately concluding that insanity and revenge are indulgences she must forsake. Tomo is possessed, instead, by a different sort of madness, 'many times the strength of Oiwa's,' which causes her to hug her daughter, Etsuko, 'all the more fiercely as though the act were a prayer.'⁵³ In the rupture created by the literary text she expresses a passion for the child which might compensate for the erasure of other desires and the indignity of having her polygynous husband bring the objects of his sexual affection into her home.

However, it is the tale of Vaidehi that has the greatest impact on Tomo, whose damaged relationship with her son is perhaps even

more of a personal tragedy than the empty relationship with her husband. Initially contemptuous of her mother's exhortations to take up the way of the Buddha, Tomo eventually accepts her long-dead parent's advice. She attends a lecture by a Buddhist priest and hears the story of Vaidehi, the Indian queen cursed with a child she could not love. Enchi's penchant for the subversive and her ability to strategically invert conventional discourse is brilliantly demonstrated in her reading of this fable which she interprets in a way that completely undermines mainstream understandings. Her reading also targets one of the prime pillars of the Japanese family philosophy and associated good wife, wise mother ideology, namely, the ascendancy of the son and the mythologised mother-son relationship. Rather than indulging her son and affording him unconditional love, Tomo is a mother who loathes her eldest born male child, so that the mere sight of Michimasa 'filled her with such despair that she wanted to cover her eyes.'⁵⁴

The fable of Vaidehi presented by Enchi is, in fact, a version of the fable informing what is referred to in Japan as 'the Ajase complex.' As previously noted, this was a theory developed by psychoanalyst, Kozawa Heisaku, as a pre-war Japanese nationalist foil for Freud's Western Oedipus complex. While the Oedipal complex involves the son's desire for the mother, it focuses principally on enmity between the father and the son. The Ajase complex, however, focuses on the relationship between the son and the mother, particularly the son's sense of rage at what he believes to be the undue influence of the mother in his life. In addition to Kozawa, a number of prominent Japanese thinkers have advocated a theory of the 'suffocating mother,' including literary and social critic, Etô Jun, psychologist and social commentator, Kawai Hayao, and Kozawa protégé and psychoanalyst, Okonogi Keigo.⁵⁵ Notwithstanding the fluidity of the ancient Indian myths upon which many Buddhist fables are grounded, Kozawa's interpretation of the Ajase complex is derived from a static reading of the Vaidehi fable and one that is particularly damning to mothers. However, the version of the fable upon which Enchi draws differs markedly from that proposed by Kozawa

Kozawa's myth tells of an Indian queen who, fearful of losing her beauty and the love of her husband to the onset of age, longs obsessively for a child. Impatient to conceive, the queen murders a hermit whom a soothsayer has predicted will be reincarnated as her child. The hermit curses the queen with his dying breath, claiming that he will be avenged by the child who will one day kill Vaidehi's husband, the king. Fearful of the soothsayer's prediction, the queen tries to kill her newly-born child, Ajase. However, she is unsuccessful and the child grows to adolescence whereupon he learns the circumstances of his birth. Filled with hatred for the mother who

nurtured him and whom he once adored, Ajase is also struck with guilt for harbouring such thoughts. He thereupon falls prey to a melancholy illness causing his whole body to putrefy. The queen, of course, nurses her son throughout his ordeal, appealing all the while to the Lord Buddha for respite. The Buddha's intercession brings succour to the queen and her son who, thereby cured of both his animosity toward his mother and his affliction, becomes a just and noble king.

In Enchi's rendering of the fable, however, it is the husband who murders the ascetic, while Vaidehi, deeply in love with her husband, is unaware of the crime. Antagonistic towards both parents, the child incarcerates the father in prison where he falls seriously ill. In a highly sensual diversion from Kosawa's reading, Vaidehi, desperate to save the life of her beloved, smears her body with honey and allows the deposed and ailing king to lick the sweet substance from her naked skin. However, she is discovered doing so by her son who imprisons her in turn. Powerless in the depths of 'hell, a world of boundless darkness and horror,'⁵⁶ Vaidehi 'earnestly and passionately (calls) on the Lord Buddha.'⁵⁷ She is rewarded for her faith with a 'description of the resplendent glories of [Lord Amida's] Pure Land.'⁵⁸ This last point is significant in that it also gives the tale an association with Enchi's mother and the woman's promise to her daughter that she will find solace in the Lord Buddha's path.

Enchi's interpretation of the fable is diametrically opposed to Kosawa's, particularly her denial of the mother/son reconciliation given in the psychoanalyst's reading. From the time of his conception, her son remains 'an evil soul, the product of her husband's karma,' and 'the devil to whom she had given birth.'⁵⁹ It is worth noting that, in addition to contesting the ascendancy of the mother-son bond in this interpretation, Enchi also foregrounds the sexuality of the mother in her account of Vaidehi's offering her honey-smeared body as sustenance for her frail and ailing husband. It is a complex image, fusing the nurturant with the seductive in a manner prohibited by official mother discourses. This is notwithstanding the fact that, as Anne Allison has noted, a sub-culture fantasy of mothers directing sexual desire towards their sons is a powerful trope in contemporary Japan.⁶⁰ The Enchi corpus, too, features the image of the older woman desiring a relationship with a younger man. However, in this fable the mother's desire is expressed unequivocally towards her adult partner.

In addition to presenting Tomo with a narrative which authorizes her problematic relationship with her son, contact with the tale of Vaidehi brings about what might be considered a reconciliation between the protagonist and her long dead mother. Where she had earlier been skeptical regarding Buddhist beliefs, Tomo's increasing

despair leads her to seek solace in the same prayers and chants that once comforted her mother. Her affiliation with the older woman's faith strengthens as she grows older, and she comes to replicate her mother's relationship with the teachings of the Buddha. In the closing sequence of the narrative, she labours up the hill outside her home, in ill health and soon to be bed-ridden. Reviewing her life and its significance with each step, Tomo understands that 'some power, outside herself, had determined the course that she should take.' Overcome with an 'icy sense of desolation,' she seeks consolation in the same chant that long ago gave relief to her mother:

'Namu Amida Butsu, Namu Amida Butsu' Effortlessly the muttered invocation of the Buddha found its way to Tomo's lips: sometimes it went on and on unconsciously with an intensity that made them burn.⁶¹

The passage demonstrates a genealogy of subjugation with her mother and an understanding that effective contestation of the discourses which constrain them is beyond their individual power. The only solace lies in a collective mother-daughter subjectivity mediated by the hypnotic calmativ of the chant.

If Tomo's voice responds to the impetus of the secondary text, it is also clearly heard when confronted with the sexual dissipation of her errant husband. In these instances Enchi goes to some lengths to make absolutely clear to the reader that while Tomo might endure, while she might lack either the will or the strategies to alter her circumstances, she never once concedes the right of the discourse to silence her private voice. Even when publicly speaking support, Tomo's private voice rages against the discourse. Particularly moving is an incident that occurs following her discovery of Yukitomo's 'trampling into the forbidden territory of his son's own marriage'⁶² by entering into a sexual liaison with his daughter-in-law, Miya. It is a discovery which causes Tomo to voice despair at her role as a mother. Tomo sits with Suga and other family members watching her three small grandsons at play. She is aware of Suga's desire for a child. However, as the mother of the hateful Michimasa, Tomo is also well acquainted with maternal suffering. She contemplates as follows:

A sudden wave of abhorrence made her suddenly turn back to Suga's childless lap with something like a sense of relief. 'What do you want with children?' she longed to whisper to Suga. 'They only tie you more tightly to the wheel of fate.'⁶³

The voice Tomo speaks is a powerful one, revealing that the role to which she has committed herself is not without penalty. Though the words are again few, and the voice withheld from the scrutiny of the public arena, the level of transgression is significant.

However, readers must wait the entire duration of the narrative to hear Tomo voice the statement which undeniably marks the liberation of her subjugated private speech. As her death approaches in the closing pages of the text, Tomo realises that there is no further purpose to the subterfuge of wifely courtesy she has taken to using with her husband. Nor has she any desire to emulate Oiwa of *The Yotsuya Ghost Tale*, who takes her revenge beyond the grave. Instead, she deploys a tactic designed to deliver the maximum impact upon her husband and the system he represents, a tactic which contests the very core of the discursive practices which have dominated her life. From her deathbed she sends Yukitomo a message informing him that she will not be buried in the family plot in the usual way. Instead, she declares, he is to dump her corpse into the seas off the coast of Shinagawa.⁶⁴ The narrative notes that Tomo uttered the word 'dump' with 'a kind of pleasure,'⁶⁵ the emphasis on the act of abandonment confirming the manner in which her statement canvasses the unthinkable in terms of Japanese family practice. Other indicators of his wife's clandestine independence have already unsettled Yukitomo, including the disclosure that Tomo held back some travel money from the time of Suga's purchase and used this to amass a sizeable private fortune. However, he is stunned when confronted with the 'full force of the emotions that his wife had struggled to repress for forty years past,' emotions which demonstrate her complete and utter contempt for the family system of the time and the protocols which held this system together. Enchi closes the text with the observation that, 'the shock was enough to split his arrogant ego in two.'⁶⁶

Tomo's request is a powerful passage, much commented upon for its transgressive element by those who discuss Enchi's work.⁶⁷ However, ultimately, it must be acknowledged that this voicing of maternal desire is surely without long-term strategic significance. The impact on Yukitomo is certainly impressive. Nevertheless, upon hearing her words he immediately sends a return message to the effect that his wife 'will be buried in proper style from this residence.'⁶⁸ The plans for the funeral undoubtedly proceed in the conventional manner,⁶⁹ demonstrating the inefficacy of Tomo's voice and maternal voices generally. While Tomo's words might shatter Yukitomo's ego, while they might even be recorded in Enchi's text for posterity, ultimately their power to disrupt the discourse in a manner that results in permanent change is minimal. Yukitomo, for all his culpability, has the ascendancy, attending the funerals of both his wife and the daughter-in-law who is also his lover. In spite of his being ten years older than Tomo, Yukitomo lives on, youthful and vital in his old age, as if granted the power of regeneration through a life of unusually intense dissipation and the unrestrained expression

of his desire. It had been Tomo's long held dream ultimately to triumph over her husband by living just one extra day without his presence to impede the freedom of her voice. However, this was not to be.⁷⁰

Tomo's ordeal has drawn the interest of many commentators. Few, however, express concern for Yukitomo's first concubine, the blighted Suga, in spite of the fact that Enchi gives her considerable prominence in the text. In fact, on at least one occasion her significance has been actively discounted, with S. Yumiko Hulvey citing Enchi's foregrounding of the girl in various places throughout the novel as evidence of narratorial incoherence.⁷¹ However, Suga is a disturbing and pervasive presence. While her childlessness may appear to make her unsuitable for inclusion in a discussion on the subjugated maternal voice, Enchi repeatedly refers to the negative personal and social consequences of this condition. Thus the girl can be considered a reverse image of the trope of maternity. Furthermore, in the same way that her public voice is almost completely silenced by the very social structures that operate to silence the mother, Suga also privately speaks her suppressed desires. It will therefore be useful to briefly consider the yawning absence of motherhood and the accompanying silence engulfing Suga as a filter through which to examine the mother's subjugated voice.

Suga is consumed by desire for a child, a yearning dismissed by her master, Yukitomo, who informs her that her body is unsuitable for childbirth. Yukitomo's words have a devastating effect and invoke a deep sense of loss and disorientation, for Suga instinctively understands the social worthlessness of the woman who fails to give birth that Rebecca Copeland analyses.⁷² Her distress is explained as follows:

The words branded themselves indelibly on her mind. She had no particular desire for a child by [Yukitomo], yet to be dismissed as a woman who could not bear children shrouded her heart with the forlorn sensation of being on a journey through the dusk with no place to rest at the end of the road.⁷³

In Tomo and Suga, Enchi presents the differing negative consequences of both exclusive options to which women were limited by the dominant discourses of the era. Tomo may be a representation of the repressive forces that engender abjection in the wise mother who is also a good wife. However, Enchi's representation of Suga demonstrates that *not* being a mother exacts a toll that may be even greater. To some extent, Suga's burden relates also to her role as restrained object of her master's sexual desire. Upon hearing, for instance, that one of the maids regards Michimasa's loathsomeness as retribution for Yukitomo's sexual excess, Suga's response is self-

disgust. 'She reminded herself,' the narratorial voice declares, 'of a ditch that would not allow things to flow through smoothly but became clogged with filth.'⁷⁴ Nevertheless, her distress is related to her inability to bear a child as much as to her position in the household. When Tomoyuki's second concubine, Yumi, departs to marry, it is not only her freedom that Suga covets. Yumi's ability to have a child is also the focus of Suga's despair in 'the hell where [she] was helplessly floundering.'⁷⁵ She tells Yumi:

'A servant cherished to death, that's me. . . . When I look at it that way I envy you, clearing out definitely like this. If you marry Mr Iwamoto you'll probably have children, and you'll be able to go out and about without feeling inferior to anybody.'⁷⁶

In a stroke of narrative brilliance, Enchi further foregrounds Suga's abjection through her representation of the girl's loss of anal blood. Suga suffers from haemorrhoids. As she lurches in agony to the toilet she leaves a trail of blood flowing from her inflamed and ruptured veins. Subverting the usual depiction of feminine marginalisation through the image of menstrual blood, Enchi suggests that although the blood associated with childbirth and feminine reproductive cycles may well have the discursive trace of abjection, even more damning is the blood that seeps from female orifices not associated with these maternal processes.

We have seen how Enchi interrogates the usual discursive valorisation of the mother-son relationship by offering a mother who loathes her son. As an extension of this, the author works to actively foreground the mother-daughter bond. The principal mother-daughter dyads featured in the text enjoy a collective subjectivity that permits a deep-seated affection and exchange of voice capable of operating even across physical absence. Suga's mother for instance, is forced to sell her daughter into concubinage. Nevertheless she is a recurring presence throughout the text, inquiring after and expressing concern for the daughter so relinquished. It is true that her relationship with the girl is defined by the phallogentric social institutions which surround the pair and that her expression of affection is only permitted to the extent tolerated by those institutions. Nevertheless, physically estranged from her daughter though she may be, she continues to speak to the girl through various intermediaries.

It is interesting to note that something of an alliance develops between Suga's mother, and Tomo who, it might be argued, becomes Suga's surrogate mother. Different though their circumstances are, the lives and voices of both women are subject to the same discursive restraints. Thus, at the time of Suga's sale we hear the voice of each rail against the context which condemns them to their respective

humiliations. As she cedes her daughter to the family of privilege, the impoverished woman, who 'felt intense guilt at letting [Suga] go for the sake of money,' appeals to Tomo as 'her only source of hope.' Tomo's response is to accept maternal responsibility for 'the future security of the woman who was presumably to deprive her of her husband's love' and to regard the unfortunate girl in the same light as her own child.⁷⁷ This should not be interpreted as a romanticisation of the mother-daughter bond. We have already noted that Tomo's unyielding personal demeanour impinges much more severely on Suga than that of her more relaxed master, Yukitomo. Nevertheless, Tomo's determination to protect the girl is never compromised. On the contrary, her vow to ensure that no harm comes to Suga voices a position which interrogates one of the great myths of the phallocentric establishment, namely the rivalry of the wife and concubine.⁷⁸ In its stead, the text has the mother of the concubine and the woman whom she will displace entering into a maternal pact for the girl's protection.

Of course, Tomo's primary maternal relationship is with her daughter, Etsuko. In spite of her passion for the child, however, this mother-daughter bond is fraught with the same restraints which are a feature of all Tomo's relationships. Thus, Suga is not the only young woman in the house intimidated by the mistress's uncompromising demeanour. Tomo is initially determined also to school her own daughter thoroughly in the phallocentric practices which constrained women of the time. The severity of this schooling has a dramatic impact on the girl, so that:

Etsuko seemed to fear the disapproval of her mother, who had only to utter the word, 'Etsuko,' in a low voice for the girl to seem suddenly to shrink into herself and come to sit by her side.⁷⁹

It is not until the girl becomes an adult and leaves the household that she is able to become independent of her mother's influence. After a period of absence from the text, she thus appears in the closing stages as a confident and competent woman able to care for her mother as the latter faces illness and death. It is ultimately Etsuko who adopts a maternal role towards Tomo, soothing and consoling her mother's final days. In fact, so apparent is the depth of affection between the two women that the reader finds it difficult not to feel some sorrow at the manner in which the earlier relationship between this mother and her daughter was so harshly constrained by the former's dutiful affiliation with discursive norms.

However the narrative does provide a model of a mother and daughter whose voices are heard without restraint and who are free from the strictures of the phallocentric world. Tomo's journey to Tokyo in the opening pages of the novel sees her staying at the home

of Kin and Toshi, a mother-daughter pair who live in a purely feminine realm. Kin is a widow and, through illness and disability, Toshi has been judged by society as unfit for marriage. This social 'misfortune,' however, is undoubtedly an individual advantage. For, not only is the girl thus saved from the demands of the discourse of good wife and wise mother, she is free to develop an unencumbered relationship with her mother that will last indefinitely. This is a privilege denied to those young women whose bonds of physical proximity with their mothers are severed through marriage or other contingencies including, in Suga's case, being purchased as a concubine. In fact, it might be argued that, with her usual attention to diversity, Enchi has deliberately presented the unmarried Toshi to her readers as a foil for the tragedy of the unmarried Suga.⁸⁰ Kin and Toshi enjoy a harmony not available to women restrained by the rigid demands of the patriarchal family code. The pair share a small house where they demonstrate a deep and mutually consolatory collegiality in a relationship that is more sororal than parent-child. The two do not always agree. When discussing Tomo's humiliation, for example, the pragmatic Kin sees Tomo's lot as an inevitable part of being the wife of a successful official. Toshi, on the other hand, sheds tears for each of the women in Yukitomo's household.⁸¹ Nevertheless, both speak their respective voices free of fear of censure. The harmonious relationship enjoyed by these two women is presented in the opening chapter of the novel and establishes a benchmark against which the tensions inherent in the relationships between those mothers and daughters in more constrained circumstances refract starkly.

For each of the women discussed above, 'motherhood' is a defence against the patriarchy. It is a realm where, regardless of institutional expectations, the demands of the Law are powerless. Here women are largely free to nourish their identities and conduct themselves according to the symbiotic economy generated by the mother-daughter bond. Their motherhood gives them an ascendancy, an entrée to a sphere from which the patriarch with his dependence on codified law is excluded. Admittedly, there is a powerlessness inherent in this sphere, since it is of no tactical use in interrogating or transforming the social structure. Nevertheless, it provides a site for those voices which are subjugated in the wider social context. In theorising these maternal voices, the discussion has drawn on theoretical notions proposed by Western feminist scholars. This has not been to demonstrate any 'lack' in the theoretical constructs available at the local level of the text's production. Rather the material invoked, particularly that of Walker, has been presented as part of a deliberate strategy to highlight the commonalities in the experiences of women of diverse backgrounds, particularly as these apply to maternity. As Monnet has argued, far from being a claim for

universal validity, such a strategy requires a constant 'expanding, retracting and transforming' of critical scholarship in a manner that permits it to be 'somehow commensurate' with the 'life speaking out' in any text.

Barbara Hartley

Notes

¹ Michelle Boulous Walker, *Philosophy and the Maternal Body: Reading Silence*. London; New York: Routledge, 1998.

² With the exception of scholars, such as Masao Miyoshi, who write in English, Japanese names are written in the usual Japanese convention of surname first.

³ See, for example, Kubota Masafumi's discussion of Enchi's switch from drama to the novel in his commentary to Enchi's 1959 collected works. Kubota Masafumi, 'Kaisetsu' (Commentary), in *Gendai Nihon bungaku zenshû: Enchi Fumiko shû*. Tokyo: Chikuma Shobô, 1959, 421.

⁴ On those occasions when the relationship involves a young man, such as 'Fuyu momiji' (1959, 'The Autumn Leaves of Winter') and 'Mekura oni' (1962; tr. 'Blind Man's Bluff,' 1986), a strong sexual overtone can be present.

⁵ Juliet Winters Carpenter cites Enchi's protestation when a publisher advertised her work as semi-autobiographical. Winters Carpenter also notes that Enchi was an adherent of the tenet promulgated, according to Enchi on page 43 of Volume 12 of the definitive 1977-78 Shinchôsha edition of her collected works, by prominent poet, novelist and literary critic, Satô Haruo (1892-1964), that the novel is 'a pack of utter lies grounded in reality.' Juliet Winters Carpenter, 'Enchi Fumiko: 'A Writer of Tales,' in *Japan Quarterly*, July-September 1990, 343. These points need to be read in conjunction with Enchi's comments in footnote 4 below.

⁶ Komatsu Shinroku cites Enchi's 'Onna no ikikata,' (How Women Live) in which the author notes that she does not have the capacity to approach text production with 'a bird's eye view' that draws from outside her own experiences. Komatsu Shinroku, 'Hito to bungaku' (The Woman and Her Literature), in *Chikuma. gendai bungaku taikei 41: Hirabayashi Taiko, Enchi Fumiko shû*. Tokyo: Chikuma Shobô, 1978, 508.

⁷ See, for example, Takami Jun. 'Muzan no bi: Enchi Fumiko Shi no shôsetsu' (Cruel Beauty: The Novels of Enchi Fumiko), in *Gendai Nihon bungaku zenshû: Enchi Fumiko shû*. Tokyo: Chikumashobô, 1959, 416, and Ogasawara Yoshiko, 'Enchi Fumiko: Hito to bungaku' (Enchi Fumiko: The Woman and Her Literature), in *Enchi Fumiko no sekai*, edited by Kamei Hideo and Ogasawara Yoshiko. Tokyo: Sôrinsha, 1981, 39.

⁸ During its eight-year serialisation, *The Waiting Years* made little critical impact and was rejected as a book by Shinchôsha which supported the serial version. It was only released as a book in 1957 after Enchi took the manuscript to Kadokawa. The work was jointly awarded the 1957 Noma Prize. See Ogasawara 1981, 38-39.

⁹ The Japanese term is *ryôsaikenbo*. For an account of this, see Vera Mackie's discussion on discourses of the family and state. Vera Mackie, *Creating Socialist Women in Japan: Gender, Labour, and Activism, 1900-1937*. Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997, 37-41. See also Chapter 4, entitled 'Mothers.' Koyama Shizuko, *Ryôsaikenbo to iu kihan* (The Normative Standard

- of Good Wife and Wise Mother). Tokyo: Keisô Shobô, 1991 gives a detailed discussion in Japanese.
- ¹⁰ Koyama 1991, 13–14, Sharon L. Sievers, *Flowers in Salt: The Beginnings of Feminist Consciousness in Modern Japan*. Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1983, 22, and Masao Miyoshi, *Off Center: Power and Culture Relations between Japan and the United States*. Cambridge, Massachusetts; London: Harvard University Press, 1994, 194. Miyoshi cites trailblazing woman historian, Takamure Itsue, as his source, specifically Takamure Itsue, *Josei no rekishi*. Tôkyô: Kôdansha, Volume 2, 1972, Chapter 4, Section 2, entitled 'Ryôsai'kenbo kyôiku' (page numbers not provided).
- ¹¹ Theorists included Jean Jacques Rousseau and Johann H. Pestalozzi.
- ¹² Enchi has the narrative draw to a close in the third or fourth year of the Great War, Enchi 1971, 179. The novel opens with Tomo's trip from Fukushima to Tokyo and closes with her death.
- ¹³ Enchi 1971, 81.
- ¹⁴ Ibid.
- ¹⁵ The Japanese term is *fukokukyôhei*. This was one of the slogans of Japan's early imperial project.
- ¹⁶ Walker 1998, 27.
- ¹⁷ Ibid.
- ¹⁸ For an English language discussion of this, see, for example, Fuminobu Murakami's discussion in *Postmodern, Feminist and Postcolonial Currents in Contemporary Japanese Culture: A Reading of Murakami Haruki, Yoshimoto Banana, Yoshimoto Takaaki and Karatani Kôjin*, London and NY: Routledge, 2005, 95–135, entitled 'Yoshimoto Takaaki and the Subaltern.' For an essay by Yoshimoto himself on this issue, see "Minshushugi bungaku" hihan' (A Criticism of 'Democratic Literature') in Volume 4 of the writer's collected works published between 1968 and 1975, Keisei Shobô.
- ¹⁹ Chandra Talpade Mohanty, 'Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses.' In *Third World Women and the Politics of Feminism*, ed. Chandra Talpade Mohanty, Ann Russo, and Lourdes Torres. Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1991, 55.
- ²⁰ Mohanty, 1991, 55, 140.
- ²¹ Arjun Appadurai, 'Putting Hierarchy in its Place,' *Cultural Anthropology*, February 1988, 36–49.
- ²² Spivak 1988, 136.
- ²³ See the chapter, 'Travelling Theory,' in Edward W. Said, *The World, the Text, and the Critic*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1983. Here, among other things, Said discusses Lucien Goldmann's appropriation of the ideas of Georg Lukács. Said argues that Goldmann's so-called 'misreading' of Lukács is, in fact, a legitimate 'historical transfer of ideas and theories from one setting to another,' 226–247.
- ²⁴ Edward Fowler, 'Rendering Words: On the Art and Politics of Translating Modern Japanese Fiction,' *Journal of Japanese Studies* 18:1, Winter 1992, 1–33.
- ²⁵ Livia Monnet, "In the Beginning Woman Was the Sun: Autobiographies of Modern Japanese Women Writers (Part 1)," *Japan Forum* 1:1, April 1989, 53–82.
- ²⁶ Monnet, 56.
- ²⁷ See, for example, Lisa Walsh's discussion of Levinas's negation of the feminine and maternal subjectivity. Lisa Walsh, 'Between maternity and paternity:

- figuring ethical subjectivity,' *A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies* 12:1 (2001), 93–107.
- ²⁸ Irigaray 1981, quoted in Margaret Whitford, *Luce Irigaray: Philosophy in the Feminine*. New York; London: Routledge, 1991, 75.
- ²⁹ Mary-Lu Hill, *Mothering Modernity: Feminism, Modernity, and the Maternal Muse*. New York; London: Garland Publishing, 1999. Daly and Reddy also provide examples of silenced mothers in Western texts. See Brenda O. Daly and Maureen T. Reddy. *Narrating Mothers: Theorising Maternal Subjectivities*. Knoxville, Tennessee: University of Tennessee, 1991.
- ³⁰ Okuda Kôji, 'Kôfuku na Kazoku: Bosei Ideogogii no Isô' (The Happy Family: The Topology of an Ideology of Motherhood), in *Kokubungaku Kaishaku to Kanshō*, February 1999, 118, 117–121.
- ³¹ Okuda 1999, 121, citing from the memoirs of Nakagawa Issei, Mushanokôji's illustrator.
- ³² See Kôno Taeko, 'Toddler Hunting,' translated by Lucy North in *Toddler Hunting and Other Stories*, edited by Lucy North. New York: New Directions Publishing Corporation, 1996.
- ³³ See Enchi Fumiko, *The Waiting Years*, translated by John Bester. Tokyo; Palo Alto, California: Kodansha International, 1971, 51. Here Enchi explains why Tomo does not leave her husband.
- ³⁴ Enchi herself stated that Tomo was a woman of strong passion and eroticism. See Enchi and Kumasaka Atsuko, 'Enchi Fumiko Shi ni Kiku' (Listening to Enchi Fumiko), in *Kokubungaku Kaishaku to Kyôzai no Kenkyû* 21:9, July 1976, 26–29, 35.
- ³⁵ Enchi 1971, 13.
- ³⁶ Enchi 1971, 32.
- ³⁷ See Enchi, 36, for details of the first meeting of the pair.
- ³⁸ Enchi declared that Tomo was an intelligent woman nonetheless handicapped by her provincial background and lack of education. See Enchi and Kumasaka 1976, 32.
- ³⁹ See Enchi 1971, 67–68 or 120–121, for examples of Suga's trepidation before Tomo.
- ⁴⁰ Enchi 1971, 53–54.
- ⁴¹ Enchi 1971, 43–45. For an account of this tale see Hironaga 1976, 404–405. Enchi herself provides the crucial elements of the plot. Enchi 1971, 43–44.
- ⁴² Enchi 1971, 141–144. In Japanese, Queen Vaidehi's name is read as 'Idaika.' The tale of Ajase and Vaidehi is found in the Kanmuryôju Sutra (Amitayur Dhyana Sutra) of True Pure Land Buddhism.
- ⁴³ For a discussion of this and other aspects of the Ajase complex, see Peter Dale, *The Myth of Japanese Uniqueness*. London: Routledge with Nissan Institute for Japanese Studies, 1990, 117–119.
- ⁴⁴ Enchi 1971, also makes mention of the Oedipal story, 157–158. However, since Tomo does not respond directly to this narrative, no discussion is provided here.
- ⁴⁵ Enchi 1971, 53.
- ⁴⁶ For Tomo, too, writing is a laborious process. See the mention of messages sent by Tomo in Tokyo to her husband in Fukushima and Tomo's will being revealed to Yukitomo just prior to her death, 23 and 199 respectively.
- ⁴⁷ As Japanese Derrida scholar, Azuma Hiroki, has noted, the letter is a repeated trope in the work of Derrida. In *The Post Card: From Socrates to Freud and Beyond*, for example, Derrida uses the letter as a metaphor for deconstruction given that there can be no guarantee that a missive will be delivered. (He thus

reads against Lacan, who argues that the letter will always be delivered.) In Enchi's 1971, text, there can be no guarantee that the contents of the letter will have meaning. For further discussion of Derrida's use of the letter see Patrick Fuery, *Theories of Desire*. Carlton, Victoria: Melbourne University Press, 1995. See Azuma's 1998 work, *Sonzaironteki, Yûbinteki (Ontological, Postal)* published by Shinchôsha.

⁴⁸ Enchi 1971, 54. Tomo earlier dismissed this argument when put to her by Kin, the Tokyo woman who assisted with the search for a concubine. Enchi 1971, 14.

⁴⁹ There are various translations for this Pure Land Buddhist chant, known as the *nembutsu*. Others include 'Homage to the Buddha of Infinite Light and Life' and 'Total Reliance on the Compassionate Power of Amida Buddha.'

⁵⁰ Enchi 1971, 54.

⁵¹ Enchi 1971, 54–55.

⁵² In an essay on the representation of evil in *kabuki*, Enchi cites Tamiya Iemon as a *kabuki* character representing the most heinous form of evil. See Enchi Fumiko, 'Akunin to Iu Mono' (Evil People), in *Aku*, edited by Kôno Taeko. Tokyo: Sakuhinsha, 1990, 60.

⁵³ Enchi 1971, 44.

⁵⁴ Enchi 1971, 84–85.

⁵⁵ See, for example, Etô Jun. *Seijuku to Sôshitsu: 'haha' no Hôkai* (Maturity and Loss: The Collapse of 'the Mother'). Tokyo: Kôdansha Bungei Bunko, 1993, Kawai Hayao, *Nihon shakai to jendaa* (Japanese Society and Gender). Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1994, and Okonogi Keigo, 'Ajase Konpurekkusuron no Tenkai' (The Development of the Ajase Complex Theory), in *Ajase Konpurekkusu* edited by Okonogi Keigo and Kitayama Osamu. Tokyo: Sôgensha, 2000.

⁵⁶ Enchi 1971, 142–143.

⁵⁷ Enchi 1971, 143.

⁵⁸ Enchi 1971.

⁵⁹ Enchi 1971.

⁶⁰ Anne Allison, *Permitted and Prohibited Desires: Mothers, Comics, and Censorship in Japan*. Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1996. See Chapter 6, entitled 'Transgressions of the Everyday: Stories of Mother-Son Incest in Japanese Popular Culture,' 123–146.

⁶¹ Enchi 1971, 186.

⁶² Enchi 1971, 105.

⁶³ Enchi 1971, 129.

⁶⁴ Enchi stated that this speech, which finally permitted Tomo to say what she wanted, was to be the latter's revenge on Yukitomo. Enchi Fumiko and Kumasaka Atsuko. 'Intâbyû: Enchi Fumiko ni kiku' (Interview: Listening to Enchi Fumiko). *Bungakukai*, 21:9, July 1976, 26–39. Shinagawa is an inner Tokyo bayside suburb.

⁶⁵ Enchi 1971, 201–202. The original Japanese for the action described is 'umi e zanburi sute[ru]' meaning 'to throw something away into the sea with great force.' The sense of force is expressed in Japanese with the adverb 'zanburi.' However, translator Bestor quite legitimately shifts this sense of force to the verb 'dump' in the English translation. For the original Japanese passage, see Enchi Fumiko, 'Onnazaka' (The Waiting Years), in *Gendai Nihon bungaku zenshû: Enchi Fumiko shû*. Tokyo: Chikuma Shobô, 1959, 77–78.

⁶⁶ Enchi 1971, 203.

⁶⁷ See for instance, Ôkubo Norio, 'Onnazaka (Enchi Fumiko): Ishi to jônen no kattô' (*The Waiting Years* (Enchi Fumiko): The Conflict Between Volition and

Emotion) in *Kokubungaku Kaishaku to Kanshō*, April 1989, 58–62; Ogata Akiko, *Shōwa shōsetsu no onnatachi* (Women in Novels of the Showa Era). Tokyo: Domesushuppan, 1986, 204; Yabu Teiko. *Shōsetsu no naka no onnatachi* (Women in Novels). Sapporo: Hokkaidō Shinbunsha, 1989, 346; Itagaki Naoko. 'Enchi Fumiko' (Enchi Fumiko), in *Kokubungaku Kaishaku to Kanshō*, September 1962, 68–70; and Sakamoto Ikuo. 'Onnazaka: Enchi Fumiko' (*The Waiting Years: Enchi Fumiko*), in *Kokubungaku Kaishaku to Kanshō*, 52:10, October 1987, 136–138.

⁶⁸ Enchi 1971, 203.

⁶⁹ The funeral occurs after the close of the text.

⁷⁰ Tomo herself acknowledges this when, bed-ridden, she comments to her daughter, Etsuko, '[Grandfather] got the better of me after all, didn't he?', 196.

⁷¹ S. Yumiko Hulvey, 'Enchi Fumiko,' in *Japanese Women Writers: A Bio-Critical Sourcebook*, edited by Chieko I. Mulhern. Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1994, 51.

⁷² Rebecca Copeland, 'Motherhood as Institution,' in *Japan Quarterly* 29:1, March 1992, 101–110.

⁷³ Enchi 1971, 70.

⁷⁴ Enchi 1971, 91.

⁷⁵ Enchi 1971, 122.

⁷⁶ Enchi 1971, 119.

⁷⁷ Enchi 1971, 21.

⁷⁸ Zhang Yimou's famous film, *Raise the Red Lantern*, is one of many pieces posited on this assumption.

⁷⁹ Enchi 1971, 11.

⁸⁰ Far from having her conform to any abject paradigm of the non-wife or non-mother, Enchi has accorded Toshi powerful compensatory abilities, creating something of the aura of a shamaness around the likeable girl. Hulvey comments on this aura, suggesting it is a harbinger of what develops into a serious interest in the supernatural in later works such as *Onnamen*. Hulvey 1994, 52.

⁸¹ Enchi 1971, 30.

ERRATUM NOTICE

There were several errors in the printed text of the story, 'Sex After School', in *HECATE* 32.1 (2006).

The passages 'At School that day' to 'got so cross' (143-4); 'Bugger!'; 'Why did his mother' to 'leaned to read too'; 'Yes' to 'from her parents!' (147) should have been italicised. 'He' (line 31, 141) should read 'Her'. The word 'the' before 'Caroline' (line 14, 143) should be deleted. The word 'an' should be added after 'half' (line 25, 149). 'He' (line 4, 147) should read 'He', and punctuation in lines 35-38 should be as follows:

"College Eight" indeed!

Doesn't she get it, Matthew exclaimed to himself. That's not the main point here.

Punctuation for line 23, 151 should be 'see....'.

Sincere apologies to the author Susan Magarey

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